

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau(43) International Publication Date
17 May 2001 (17.05.2001)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 01/35277 A1

(51) International Patent Classification: G06F 17/30 (74) Agent: DWYER, Patrick, M.; Mindmatters Technologies, Inc., Suite 114, 1818 Westlake Avenue N, Seattle, WA 98109 (US).

(21) International Application Number: PCT/US00/30868

(81) Designated States (national): CA, CN, JP.

(22) International Filing Date:
10 November 2000 (10.11.2000)

(84) Designated States (regional): European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SI, TR).

(25) Filing Language: English

Published:

- With international search report.
- Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments.

(30) Priority Data:
60/165,140 12 November 1999 (12.11.1999) US
09/687,510 12 October 2000 (12.10.2000) US
09/706,513 3 November 2000 (03.11.2000) US

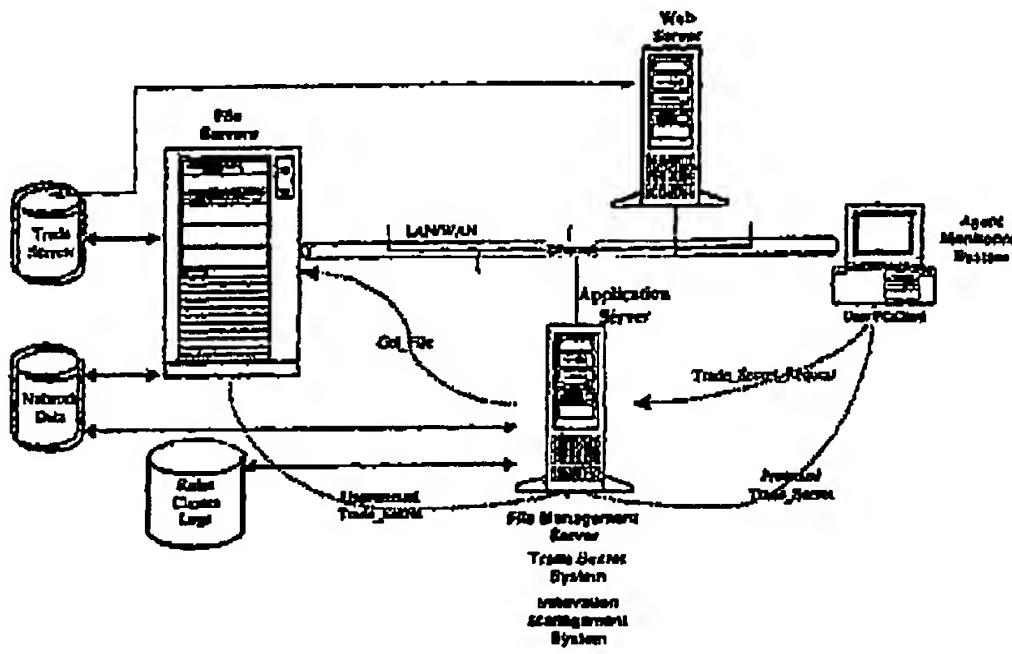
For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

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(54) Title: SYSTEM FOR AUTOMATING AND MANAGING AN ENTERPRISE IP ENVIRONMENT



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(57) Abstract: A system for streamlining the process of creating, preserving and protecting proprietary assets. The system identifies, classifies, compiles, tracks and routes real-time data automatically on a continuous basis, and provides instant access to stored database information, such as trade secret archives (trade secrets), patent filings, computed valuations (rules classes logs), user information and a variety of detailed reports. An employee has instant access to her latest innovations and proprietary materials, and constant supervision over them.

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Title: **SYSTEM FOR AUTOMATING AND MANAGING
AN ENTERPRISE IP ENVIRONMENT**

5 This application is a continuation-in-part of Ser.No. 09/687,510 filed October 12, 2000 which claimed priority to Provisional Ser.No. 60/159,129 filed October 12, 1999; and a continuation-in-part of Ser.No. [US Express Mail EL609827121US], filed November 3, 2000 which claimed priority to Provisional Ser.No. 60/163,877 filed November 5, 10 1999; this application also claims priority to Provisional Ser.No. 60/165,140 filed November 12, 1999.

TECHNICAL FIELD

15 The invention relates to knowledge management systems; more particularly it relates to systems for automating and managing an enterprise IP environment, with global communications network capabilities.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

20 The significance of intellectual property (IP) is growing daily. More and more, corporations realize the importance of preserving and protecting these vital assets, and a select few even appreciate how to capitalize on them. However, the real underlying issue that has not been addressed, up until now, is that in today's digital enterprise there is a tremendous need for a reliable, real-time system for creating, preserving and building value from corporate IP assets. This model must be in sync with today's digital world and enterprise environment and operate on a continuous, real time basis. It must work transparently with the way in which employees work and innovate. It 25 must be a useful productivity tool for IP attorneys and corporate counselors. And it must safeguard and protect the most valuable assets a company owns, its intellectual capital.

30 Many companies are only recently recognizing the rise in significance of IP as a core asset. However, even with heightened awareness, most continue to operate in antiquated ways, relying on "defensive mechanisms," such as legalistic paperwork and

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cumbersome procedures. These techniques are expensive, time-intensive, and inadequately suited for today's digital environment, since they fail to operate in real time.

Today, very few companies use the potential of information technology to 5 streamline processes, promote new innovation, and document and protect their assets. Often, their employees at just about every level are undereducated and unaware of the risks of inadvertent disclosure or competitive loss—setting the stage for future disputes and often leading to litigation, or even worse, the permanent loss of valuable trade secrets.

10 Most significantly, virtually all corporations underestimate the strategic value of their IP, and therefore, fail to capitalize on the full potential of it. And even while recognizing the growing significance of IP assets, there are essentially no companies that do an effective job at providing the knowledge-connectivity™ and incentive for new innovations.

15 In today's job market, employees are more mobile than ever before. Mergers, acquisitions, and downsizing are just a few of the reasons. The result is a constantly changing workforce, and the constant creation, disclosure, and turnover of corporate intellectual property. And whereas it is perfectly legal for a highly skilled employee to leave and go to work with a competitor, taking with him or her his own skills and 20 experience, it is not lawful to leave with proprietary company information.

These trends of higher worker mobility and the increasing value of digital assets have converged to create a tremendous opportunity for a new solution. Companies certainly want to avoid additional litigation nightmares, when even a single trade secret dispute or patent infringement suit can cost well over \$1 million in 25 legal fees. Douglas Brotz, principle scientist at Adobe Systems, commenting on a patent infringement suit described how it had cost the company more than \$4.5 million in legal fees and expenses alone, not to mention over 3,500 hours of his time—the equivalent of two, full years of working time. Most remarkably, this was a case that ~~Adobe had won initially and an appeal~~ Clearly an effective means for mitigating the